

THE NEW COMMANDMENT

BY ANTHONY VERRALL

The story of a Kentucky feud hatred transplanted in a desert oasis, where a man and a woman, turned primitive by necessity, come at last to love as intensely as they had hated.

Copyright by Edward J. Childs

CHAPTER XXII.
(Continued.)

When Nature Stirs the Blood.

HOARSE cry escaped Ghent as he suddenly launched himself forward to kill the lioness with his naked hands. His descent upon the creature was so swift and unexpected that she landed on her shoulder, with his hands at her throat before she could rise from her crouch. Instantly, however, she let out a sound of rage and surprise and rolled on her back to assault him with her claws.

She gnashed her shoulder with the first mad rake of her talons. Together they had lurched entirely over on the ground, Ghent with his fingers dug deeply in her neck, the lioness thrashing and clawing in a fury that it seemed no man could hope to withstand.

Over they went again, rolling on the level earth that lay before the cave. With one of his knees in the creature's stomach, Ghent bore down upon her heavily. The she-beast had ripped him, arm and leg, however, and was swiftly inflicting deep, ugly gashes upon him.

Judith, abruptly awakened by the sounds, came running to the opening, her heavy stone-hammer in her hand. What she saw was a half-naked man upon the earth, so closely hugged to the lioness and so wildly embroiled with the beast in fighting and violence that to tell which was uppermost or which was more terrible would have been an impossible task. She ran toward the two savage beings, her hammer raised high for a blow upon the animal's head. But she could not strike—she dared not strike, for the fear of killing Ghent.

In the utterly confusing paroxysm and commotion of her rage the panther tossed and scrambled carelessly till one of her claws caught for a moment in Judith's skirt and tore a half half from her person. Ghent all this time had never for a second loosened his terrible grip on the creature's throat. Both of his knees were pressing now upon her lungs and abdomen. He was strangling and crushing the life from her body.

When he presently had her borne helpless on the sand the man beheld a jagged piece of rock in the reach of his hand. He relinquished the grip of five of his fingers, snatched up the weapon which the mountain had provided and crashed it down upon the creature's skull with all his might.

The huge brute shivered. He struck again, and yet again, and the fierce activity seemed to wilt and shrink from the quivering frame of the panther. The battle was done.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Night of God.

ALL that night Judith labored to save John Ghent from death. All night she tore strips from her garments, and bound up his wounds, and ran back and forth between her cave and the spring for needed water. He bled tremendously. The panther had torn not only channels in his flesh, but the flesh itself from his bones. His legs were aquiver with the lacerations of nerves and veins and thence. He had lain for fifteen minutes unconscious before the first draining of his life fluid had been checked, and when morning dawned at length upon the scene he was weak, not to utter helplessness.

All that day he could not, or did not, speak. He suffered agonies, but his face betrayed no sign as he lay upon the grass of Judith's bed. Some ecstasy within him gave him far more exquisite torture, for such in the way of an overwhelming joy just struggling to his birth. At noon and at sundown Judith cooked more of her ancient cakes and put them in his hand to eat. In her eyes burned some light of exultation, for love had possessed her in its sweetness.

Her womanly ministrations had only commenced on that first spring day. With the pangs of healing in his muscles, bone and flesh, John Ghent became a weak and fevered patient, over whom Judith yearned with all the tenderness of her potential motherhood.

He mended slowly, for his wounds were deep, and new blood was making in his veins. Day after day of their silent companionship went by with joy to the served and the server. Only souls that have passed through travail such as theirs could be so naked, side by side, in the sanctifying silence that reveals the uttermost of all there could be to reveal.

A week thus passed, and Ghent was barely strong enough to sit with his back against the wall of Judith's cave while nature worked at his cuts and injuries. He never complained; not even in his sleep did a groan betray him. His progress now was rapid—his progress in everything save speech. He and Judith seemed further from speech than before.

At the end of ten days he could be kept no longer on his back or sitting down throughout the day. He got to his feet, from time to time, to flounder the sinews and flesh newly knitted in his legs. It was one of these days that some strange oppression came to haunt the very air.

Both Ghent and Judith were affected, they knew not how or why. A sense of impending disaster, or a restlessness of the inner self that was responsive to hidden warnings, took possession of them both, yet nothing seemed to happen.

It was nearly at sundown that the awesome silence and the pause of the earth were broken. The thing came not suddenly then. A distant roar that swept ever onward with incredible velocity ushered the mighty cataclysm to the mountains.

Sounds of wreck and devastation made articulate, but concentrated in a tumult such as no noise nor gale nor cataclysm ever create, involved entire creation. On its heels came the dreadful thing itself—the earthquake—rending the very hills and flapping the earth-crust like a rag of rick and sand, and heaving through adamantine ledges and gravel like a tidal wave on some molten sea which the earth may no longer contain.

Judith staggered galvanically to his feet. He reeled about like some grotesque figure in human form, Judith was flung upon her knees. She got up and was shaken once more to the earth, from which she dared not rise. The rocks all about the two seemed to tremble, and the earth to convulse itself. Ghent was cast down at Judith's side, away from the wall of the cave against which he had gone spinning, and with muffled crunching, grinding and sounds of earth-agonies the cavern was blotted from being, and only a short, shallow wrinkle in the slope marked the place where the rock and gravel had toppled in to level up the cavity. A half mile of rock-dust arose to float above the hill.

The temblor was done, with a few slight tremors like shivers of the earth in flight, and the man and woman gazed at each other, appalled. Ghent was the first to rise to his knees. Judith remained on the earth before him, propped at an angle by one of her strong bare arms. Ghent looked at her peculiarly as his lips slowly parted for speech.

"It must have been God coming home."

She gave a little shudder, but she did not speak for a time, and then she said:

"The cave is gone."

Ghent looked at it silently for fully a minute. Judith had risen. He, too, stood up, despite his weakness.

"Gone," he presently echoed solemnly. "He has shut us out together. It has taken the might and impetuosity of God to bring us face to face."

He paused in his speaking. His breath was coming fast; his form was shaken. A light of sublimity burned in his eyes. Then, as she looked at him in a tense, silent way, he added:

"I love you, Judith. Though all the tribe of Ghent should writhe in their graves, I love nothing but you!"

She looked at him silently. She did not shrink from him, she simply put her hand to her face, as one in doubt, and slowly backed a little away. He made no effort to approach her, or to touch her hand. Thus they stood

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Night of God.

He paused in his speaking. His breath was coming fast; his form was shaken. A light of sublimity burned in his eyes. Then, as she looked at him in a tense, silent way, he added:

"I love you, Judith. Though all the tribe of Ghent should writhe in their graves, I love nothing but you!"

She looked at him silently. She did not shrink from him, she simply put her hand to her face, as one in doubt, and slowly backed a little away. He made no effort to approach her, or to touch her hand. Thus they stood

Pay Day + By Jack Callahan



NEXT WEEK'S COMPLETE NOVEL

MY LADY OF DOUBT

By RANDALL PARRISH

A romance of the Revolution with hero and heroine brought together in a series of nerve-trying adventures threaded on a mystery that deepens with every chapter.

BEGINS IN NEXT MONDAY'S EVENING WORLD

before in quest of gold, remaining at this oasis spring for two days only, while the waters were rapidly falling. He was a Westerner of a thirty years' experience in the mineral bearing mountains. He was fifty-five years old, gray as a desert coyote, thin as a sword, tanned like leather, and as guileless as a child.

In utter amazement the man had listened to the tale of John Ghent and Judith Haines. He had said almost nothing, so great was the marvel of their story.

He had come from a town ninety miles to the westward, a blistered little railroad tank town at the edge of the desert. He expected to remain here a couple of months and look for the gold that tradition had long reported to abound in the range, and whether he found it or not he would certainly leave before the well should begin at its drying.

This meager bit of knowledge he had slowly imparted as he laid off the burden from his donkey. Without further ado he had made up a fire, extracted a long slab of bacon, a small sack of onions and another of potatoes from his pack, opened his one solitary can of tomatoes he had fetched against the wants of some distant day to come, and prepared a meal such as Judith and Ghent had not gazed upon for many weary months.

The three of them dined there together, sitting on the ground and eating with their fingers from the one tin plate with which the old prospector's kit was provided. It was a wonderful dinner for the pair who had lived so long like cave-dwelling savages; and they ate in silence, so filled were they both with the marvel of this man's appearance on the scene.

When at length it was finished and Winters drew forth an old black pipe, to fill and smoke with great expenditure of matches, it was Ghent who spoke of gold.

"My friend," he said, "do you know what it means to the pair of us who have lived here all these months to hear you talking of remaining for two or more months before you take us out of this terrible desert? Have you thought of that in your hunt for a mine?"

"Well, no, not exactly," said Winters drawlingly. "I didn't reckon on finding no one here."

"All right," said Ghent. "Now that you have found us, I want you to pack up to-morrow and show us the way to that railroad."

The gray old prospector relighted his pipe and reflected for a moment in silence before he answered. Then he said:

"Well, I guess that's reason—for you folks anyway. I don't suppose I'm ever going to hit it. Never have. May not be any gold in all this country anyway. Might as well start in the mornin'."

"Winters, I'd like to shake hands with you," said Ghent, to whom the man's answer had come with no little surprise. "There is a lot of gold in these hills. I've seen it. I know where it's buried. I'll show you the place and give you half of any rights you may reckon I possess. But, man, we want to start to-morrow."

Thus it came that early on the day that followed, Ghent and the tall, lean old miner walked together up the great ravine, so echoing with awful memories for the man who had one day staggered down its long, rocky way, returning from his three-day effort to escape the desolation, and so come at length to the mighty amphitheatre, then to the break in its eastern wall, and halted in the tunnel that two gold-hungry men had dug, where the vein of yellow metal gleamed so brightly in the wall.

Judith was waiting at his shelter when Ghent once more returned. It had been her home for one night only, while Ghent and Winters slept on the ground at the spring. She loved it for what it had been to Ghent, and she had waited for him here in womanly shyness.

"Judith," said Ghent, looking as before into her eyes. "We are going home—going out of this place, to people and the world. If you wish to be free—if you wish to plan some other way—if you wish you hadn't said it, yesterday—why, this is the very best time in all the world to tell me what you prefer."

She looked at him steadily, the softness increasing in her eyes.

"If you mean—that you take it all back"—she started, but he could not permit her to finish.

"Don't say it—don't say it!" he interrupted almost fiercely. "I love you—I want you to be my wife. I

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Triumph of Nature.

A YEAR had gone by in the desert—a long, tragic year with a new repetition of the days of heat, the cool, still nights of beauty and austerity; the coming of the autumn sirocco; the parching of all the oases, the falling of the spring and the awful despair of every living thing that strove for existence in the strip.

The Spring had returned again in its beauty and tenderness, replenishing the hope that burgeoned anew with every year. Nights and days of miraculous charm had succeeded one another in a round of divinely ordered loveliness.

Then, on one of the long, balmy afternoons, when all nature smiled in benevolence, there came down the slope of the western hill, that rose above the gorge, a little train of beings—two men, three burros and two women who rode upon horses. There was first a gray old prospector, then Ghent, who walked at Judith's side, and behind them the prospector's wife.

If the lean old gold-seeker typified patience, and Ghent and Judith typified God's first created pair, then the wife of the miner assuredly typified that solid, admirable symbol of wisdom, resourcefulness and tenderness that has made of the Western frontierswoman a figure unsurpassed for large-hearted virtues. Mrs. Winters could have been the mother of a nation—for the things she knew and the largeness of her heart. She had come here to mother Judith Ghent.

Down by the spring old Winters made his camp, and there for a while Judith rested. Ghent climbed the slope to where the ruins of his shelter still remained among the rocks. The storms of the Winter had torn away the roof, and the walls were gaping open to the elements.

With tools from the pack he set joyously to work, while Judith, in a new, more radiant way of beauty, and with no look of tragedy remaining on her face, smiled in companionship upon him. By evening he had made it once more a substantial cavern, provided at last, however, with something far better than a couch of mountain grass.

The night that came down was one of marvellous beauty, with the silence of centuries, desert-deep, laid far and wide upon the universe. It almost seemed as if the vast machinery that moves the stellar globules in their round must deliver up the mighty sound, that would come in some huge anthem to the place.

Ghent was profoundly stirred by all the fearful majesty of night and Nature's mysteries, here so nakedly revealed—and yet inscrutable. It was certain to his soul that God was here—in this place He had made to bide at times alone.

At length he slept, but when the gorgeous starry dipper had swung to its midnight declination, the long, weird wall, the mirthless laughter and the questioning bark of a mandetecting coyote roused him from his bed.

He came forth from his shelter, a look of slumberous strength, primordial might and conscious mastery upon his muscled frame. In his eyes burned a light of mingled tenderness and passion. In his hand he clutched the handle of the rude stone hammer that Judith had made the year before. Like a guardian cavernman watching at his door to protect his mate with his life, he sat on a stone in the starlight and waited there till dawn.

(The End.)

Betty Vincent's Advice to Lovers

THE fact that you know a person very well by no means excuses you from being as courteous to him as you would be to a casual acquaintance.

I believe one reason why marriage comes so many love affairs is to be found in the fact that husband and wife forget to be polite to each other. Courtesy is the lubricant that makes all the wheels of life run smoothly. If a man loves a woman well enough to marry her he ought to be even more considerate, even more mannerly, to her than to his other friends. If a woman cares sufficiently for a man to make him her husband she should show that instinctive delicacy in her treatment of him which she usually evinces toward her fiancé. Soft words may butter no parsnips—but they accomplish many other useful things.

"A. W." writes: "At a dance is it proper for the girl to thank her partner, after each number, or should the man thank the girl?"

He should do the thanking.

To Win His Love.

"L. K." writes: "I am eighteen and deeply in love with a boy three years my junior whom I met six months ago at a party. How can I win his love?"

Don't try in any way except by being your simple, natural self when you are in his society.

"A. D." writes: "I am nineteen years old and in love with a girl of twenty-one who works in the same office. Do you think the difference

in ages would affect our future happiness if we were to marry?"

Not necessarily, since the difference is so slight, although there always is an added element of risk when a man marries a woman older than himself.

A Wedding Invitation.

"B. W." writes: "I have received an invitation to a church wedding, including the reception at the bride's home after the ceremony. The invitation says 'U. S. V. P.' I expect to go to both the church and the house, but don't know if I am to write to say so. What shall I do?"

Write and say that you will attend both the wedding and the reception.

"M. S." writes: "What are the intentions of a young man who calls on me occasionally but never makes an engagement for the next time?"

He probably wishes to enjoy your friendship.

"E. K." writes: "When being introduced to a number of persons at one time, is it necessary to keep repeating 'I am pleased to meet you'?"

No. That is rather awkward. You may simply repeat the name of the person, as the introducer gives it to you, and smile cordially.

"C. J." writes: "A young man has been paying me attention and I love him. He did something to tease me and wouldn't stop when I asked him to do so. But when I retaliated he became very angry and since then has not come to the house. What must I do?"

Nothing. It seems to me that you are well rid of so unreasonable a young man.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Torch of Gold.

HE man who had come to the desert spring was H. Winters, prospector and sole survivor of an expedition which had camped the desert long

TAKE THE EVENING WORLD WITH YOU ON YOUR VACATION

So that you will not miss any of the weekly novels and may continue to enjoy the daily magazine, comic and other special features. Include them in your summer reading.

Order the Evening World Mailed to Your Summer Address